

THE DEAF AMERICAN



MISS DEAF AMERICA (1988-1990)—Brandeis Ann Sculthorpe of Wheaton, Illinois, was crowned Miss Deaf America at the July convention of the National Association of the Deaf held in Charleston, South Carolina, for a two-year reign. (Photo credit: Philip N. Moos)

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1988 NAD Convention Award Winners

The following awards were presented at the National Association of the Deaf's 39th Biennial Convention in Charleston, South Carolina.

- *Frederick C. Schreiber Distinguished Service Award*—Mervin D. Garretson, Maryland.
- *Knights of Flying Fingers Award*—Hubert Anderson, Washington, DC; Charlie McKinney, South Carolina; John Robertson, New Mexico; Leon Curtis, Washington; Roslyn Rosen, Maryland; Sharon Hovinga, Iowa; Tommy Walker, Arkansas; Ken Brasel, New Mexico (posthumously); and George Johnston, New Jersey.
- *President's Award*—John Yeh, Rockville, Maryland.
- *Robert M. Greenmun Award*—John Sterling White, North Carolina; Norm Larson, South Dakota; and Dale Van Hemert, Iowa.
- *Executive Director's Award*—Justin Dart, Jr., Washington, DC.
- *Dr. Andrew J. Foster Award*—Dr. Andrew J. Foster, Michigan (posthumously).
- *Golden Rose Award*—Cecil Bradley, Ohio.
- *Stokoe Scholarship Award*—Susan Mather, Maryland.
- *Legislative Recognition Award*—Senator Tom Harkin, Iowa; and Congressman Major Owens, New York.
- *Spirit of the NAD Award*—Tim Rarus, Greg Hlibok, Bridgett Bourne and Jerry Covell, all Gallaudet University students.
- *State Association Special Recognition Award*—South Dakota Association of the Deaf.
- *Achievement in Television Production Award*—*Children of a Lesser God*.
- *Outstanding Television Broadcast Award*—Ted Koppel and Peter Jennings.
- *Outstanding Literary Achievement Award*—Frank Bowe, "Changing the Rules."
- *Service Agency Recognition Award*—Deaf Counseling, Advocacy and Referral Agency, San Leandro, California.
- *Outstanding Service Organization Award*—American Association of the Deaf and Blind (Maryland) and American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association (Arizona).
- *Theatre Performance Award*—Robert D. Daniels, California.
- *Special Recognition Award*—Student Body Government, Gallaudet University.

The National Association of the Deaf

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Pub. No. ISSN 0011-720X-USPS 150 460

Editorial Office: NAD Branch Office,
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Indianapolis, IN 46204.

Advertising: 445 N. Pennsylvania,
Suite 804, Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 638-1715 TDD/V

The Deaf American is published quarterly for \$20 per year by the NAD Branch Office, 445 N. Pennsylvania, Suite 804, Indianapolis, IN 46204. Second-class postage paid at Indianapolis, IN. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Deaf American*, NAD Branch Office, 445 N. Pennsylvania, Suite 804, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

Subscription rates: United States and possessions, the Philippine Islands, Canada, Spain, Mexico, Central and South American countries except the Guineas, 1 year, \$20.00; 2 years, \$40.00. Other countries, 1 year \$30.00. Correspondence relating to editorial matters, articles should be sent to the NAD Branch Office, 445 N. Pennsylvania, Suite 804, Indianapolis, IN 46204. The editorial staff reserves the right as to what will be printed, both narrative matter and advertising. Advertising and subscriptions should be sent to *The Deaf American*, at the address stated above. Advertising does not reflect the editorial policy of the magazine or imply endorsement.

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Vol. 38 No. 3, Summer 1988

- 2 A Note from the Editor
- 3 Miss Deaf America: Brandeis Sculthorpe
- 4 Miss Deaf America Pageant Pictures
- 9 Perspectives of Sign Language Instruction
- 13 Is There a "Psychology of the Deaf"?
- 17 Letters to the Editor
- 18 What Is Sign Language?
- 20 Ghost Town: Gallaudet, Indiana
- 21 A Deaf Perspective of Interpreters

THE DEAF AMERICAN

The Deaf American is a quarterly publication aimed at the professional community, as well as at the layman who want indepth stories and articles about topics of interest in the deaf community. Libraries, schools, community centers and other information dissemination sources find *The Deaf American* a convenient source of information for patrons and students.

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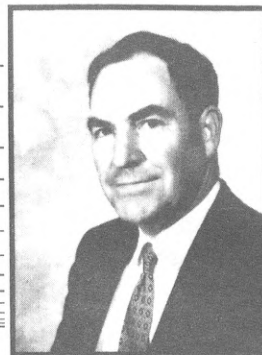
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Editor Jess Smith



One COED Recommendation Implemented

Recommendation 1 of the report of The Commission on Education of the Deaf reads: "The Congress should establish a National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders within the National Institutes of Health." Rationale: "The establishment of a National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders would provide an essential research base to investigate the causes, diagnoses, detection, prevention, control, and treatment of hearing impairments. It would also offer training, information, and continuing education programs for health professionals and disseminate information to the general public. The activities carried out by such an institute could substantially reduce the incidence and, in time, the prevalence of deafness."

On October 13, 1988, the Congress gave final approval for the bill to create this National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders. While funding and organization of this Institute will probably take months, we should all rejoice in the implementation of the COED's Recommendation 1.

Statewide Telephone Relay Systems

At this writing—and according to the best sources of information, five states have statewide telephone relay systems in place or soon to go into operation. In another state, however, funding difficulties seem to have forced curtailment of services.

As could be expected, the hangup is the cost of providing relay services. The most logical—and simplest—method is to place a surcharge on *all* telephones, reflected in monthly billings. A few cents per bill is not apt to provoke widespread complaints from non-users of relay services, but costs can escalate in a hurry once a relay system is heavily used.

Relay services combined with distribution of "free" TTYs/TDDs and their maintenance are something else again. If the hearing impaired cannot have both, we dare say they will opt for the relay services.

Relay services are **intended** to be free, but if calls become too numerous, the "metered" concept could be considered—a charge per call beyond a set number per month or other period. We wonder how many calls, on the average, a station/user makes per month once relay services become well-established.

PL 94-142 and LRE

By the time this issue reaches readers, the election will have determined the new President of the United States. Shortly thereafter, the new Chief Executive will decide which Cabinet members, if any, he will retain. The new (?) Secretary of Education will, in turn, consider the makeup of the Department of Education, especially undersecretaries and third-level administrators.

How will special education fare? How will Public Law 94-142 be *interpreted*? Notice the emphasis on interpreted. More specifically, will we have to face another effort to get the Manual 10, or a replacement, out as the directive as to what constitutes Least Restrictive Environment? Will we have to contend with another obstinate, opinionated, unrealistic appointee who rushes out of meetings and avoids direct confrontations? We hope not.

Best Wishes to WGD Athletes

Most of us are having trouble adjusting to the fact that while we are having winter it will be summer in Christchurch, New Zealand, site of the World Games of the Deaf in early January. For many of the USA athletes, participation means foregoing the holidays at home and time away from school or college.

Also, Christchurch is farther from the United States by far than any previous site of the World Games—ever more distant (unless our geography is wrong) than was Seoul, South Korea, for the USA athletes who participated in the 1988 Summer Olympics.

Best wishes to the USA contingent soon to be assembling for practice before leaving for Christchurch. Have an enjoyable trip! Bring home lots of medals!

Letters to the Editor

We welcome Letters to the Editor—be they commentary, complimentary or critical. Suggestions are also sought, especially as to content of this publication.

As is true with other periodicals, letters must be signed and in good taste. Statements which might be construed as libelous cannot be printed. And, of course, length must be reasonable.

Brandeis Sculthorpe Crowned Miss Deaf America

Brandeis Ann Sculthorpe, competing as Miss Deaf Illinois, was crowned Miss Deaf America at the 39th Biennial Convention of the National Association of the Deaf held in Charleston, South Carolina, July 5-9, 1988. She became the ninth Miss Deaf America, winner over 37 other state representatives.

Brandi, as she prefers to be known, is a 20-year-old junior at National Technical Institute for the Deaf (Rochester Institute of Technology), Rochester, New York, majoring in social work. She calls Napperville, Illinois, her home. She became profoundly deaf at the age of five from spinal meningitis. She was "mainstreamed" in public schools and graduated from Hinsdale South High School in Darien, a suburb southwest of Chicago. Hinsdale has over 100 hearing impaired students and offers support services, especially interpreters and notetakers.

In addition to winning the Miss Deaf Illinois title, Brandi

was Miss NTID 1987-1988. At NTID, she is vice president of Alpha Sigma Theta sorority and has been active in the Student Congress.

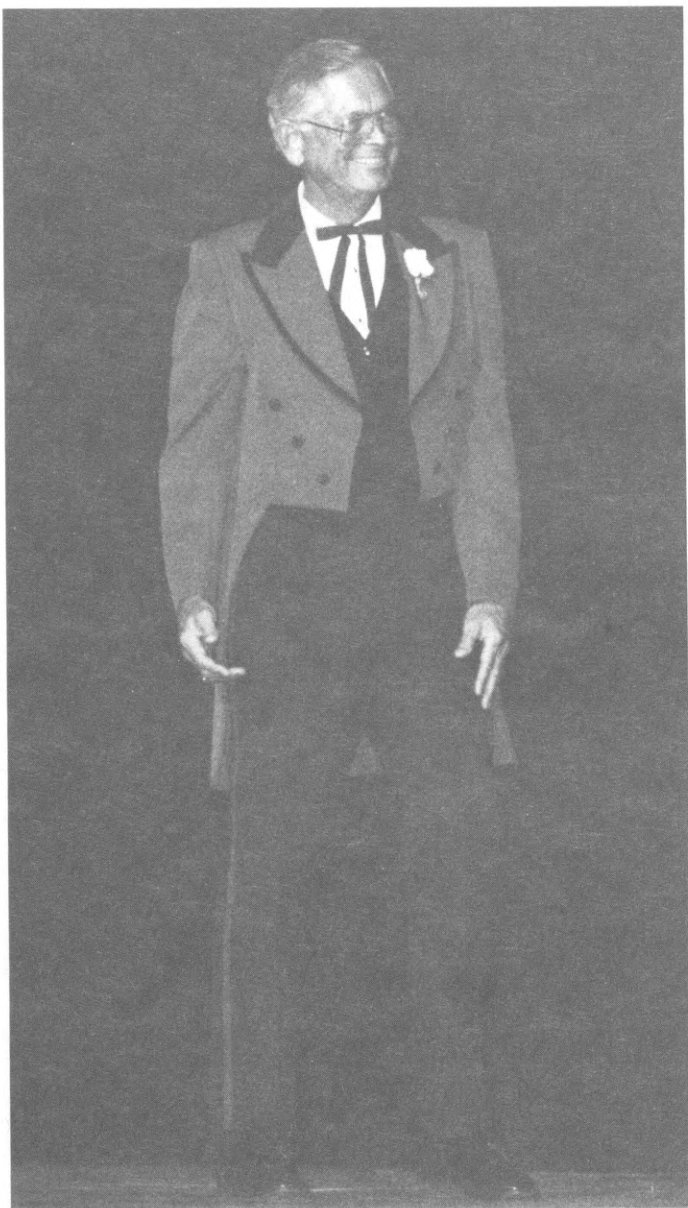
Blonde and blue-eyed, Brandi has a brother, Bryan, a sophomore at the College of DuPage. Her father owns a "Deck the Walls" store which specializes in pictures and picture framing. Her mother is a teacher; her stepfather is an engineer.

First runnerup in the 1988 Miss Deaf America Pageant was Ann Marie Mickelson, Miss Deaf Minnesota; second runner-up, Charity Marie Reedy, Miss Deaf Virginia; third runner-up, Coleen Kapuailiani Cidade, Miss Deaf Hawaii, also chosen Miss Congeniality; fourth runnerup, Pamela Rae Anderson, Miss Deaf Texas.

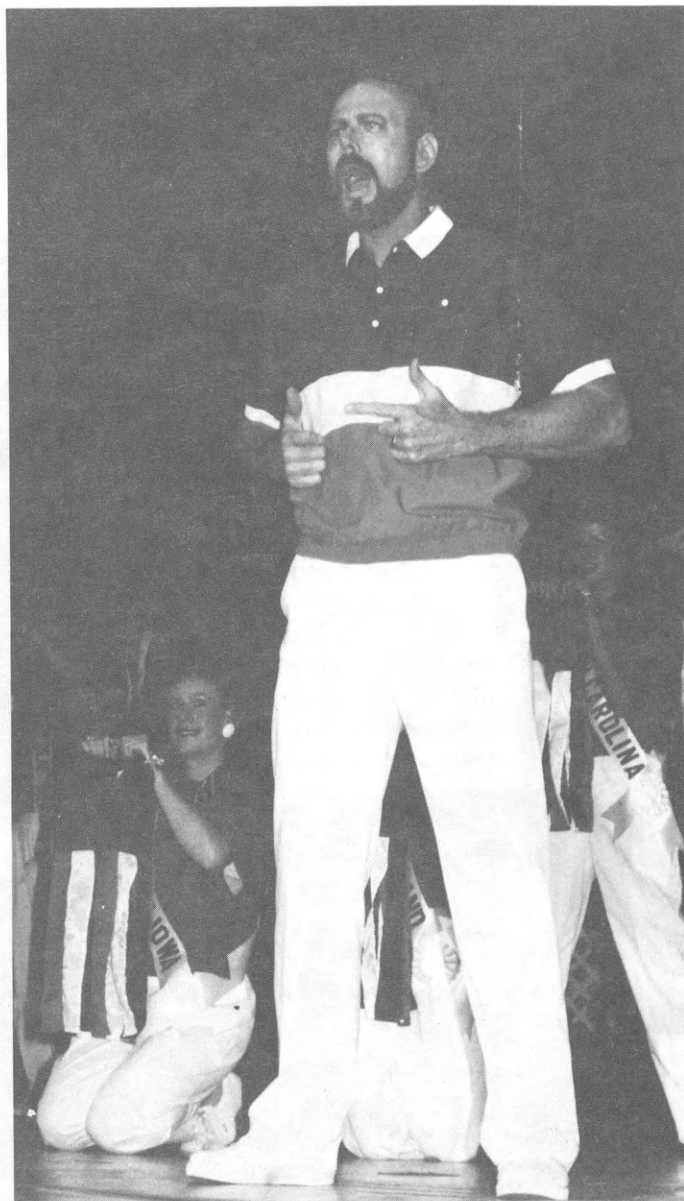
(Photo credits for all pictures in this article—Phillip N. Moos)



SALUTE TO DOUGLAS BURKE—Helen Johnson Peterson, director of the Miss Deaf America Pageant, is shown in a salute to Douglas Burke (photograph on easel), who inaugurated the first Miss Deaf America competition in 1972 as part of the NAD's Cultural Program.



EMCEE—Master of ceremonies for the ninth Miss Deaf America Pageant was Dr. Victor H. Galloway.



ENTERTAINER—Versatile Nick Elliott is shown in one of his several entertainment numbers at the Miss Deaf America Pageant.



SECOND RUNNERUP—Charity Marie Reedy, was second runnerup competing as Miss Deaf Virginia.



FIRST RUNNERUP—Ann Marie Mickelson, competing as Miss Deaf Minnesota, was first runnerup in the pageant.



THIRD RUNNERUP—Collen Kapuailliani Cidadel, Miss Deaf Hawaii, was third runnerup and was also named Miss Congeniality.



FOURTH RUNNERUP—Pamela Rae Anderson, Miss Deaf Texas, was fourth runnerup in Charleston.



QUEEN AND RUNNERSUP—Brandeis Ann Sculthorpe is surrounded by other Miss Deaf America finalists before beginning the traditional promenade.



EVENING GOWN PRESENTATION—Brandeis Ann Sculthorpe, as Miss Deaf Illinois, is shown in the evening gown presentation of Miss Deaf America contestants preliminary to the final event at which she was crowned.



PASSING OF THE CROWN—Patty Brennan, 1986-1988 Miss Deaf America, crowns her successor, Brandeis Ann Sculthorpe, who will reign for the next two years.

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From The Age of Enlightenment To An Age Of Enlightenment: Perspectives On Sign Language Instruction

BY WILLIAM J. NEWELL

Recorded history indicates that the use of sign language in the education of deaf people began in the second half of the eighteenth century during what is called the Age of Enlightenment. The Enlightenment was a time in France of tremendous philosophical, psychological and aesthetic developments. Significant philosophers of this period were Voltaire, Condillac and Locke. These men were concerned with the philosophical and psychological relationship of the senses, morality and symbolic communication (Seigel, 1969). They were developing a greater understanding of the arbitrary nature of language and its role in the human ability to know and reason. This became the atmosphere in which the Abbe de l'Epee would work and write his book *Instruction of Deaf-Mutes by Means of Methodological Signs* in 1776. The focus of this age was primarily on the human mind and it is within this philosophical framework that Epee concerned himself with awakening the minds of his deaf pupils rather than loosening their tongues. Epee's recognition that the gestures of the two young deaf sisters entrusted to his tutelage could be used to instruct them and lead them to their salvation was to become a milestone in the education of deaf people born in this Age of Enlightenment.

The New Age of Enlightenment

Understanding the Age of Enlightenment, the Age of heightened intellectual curiosity, the Age of recognition that language was an arbitrary set of rule governed symbols and that manual gestures could serve equally well as arbitrary symbols of meaning, the Age of viewing deaf persons as capable learners, I wonder if you will think me presumptuous to call our own age, an "Age of Enlightenment"? You might argue that our enlightenment has not completely "come of age." But it seems that we have been experiencing a new era, a grand enthusiasm, a thirst for knowledge not unlike the Age of Enlightenment. Since the publication of Bill Stokoe's *Dictionary of American Sign Language* the fields of education, linguistics, psychology and language/culture instruction have experienced a period of tremendous growth particularly as pertains to deaf people and Sign Language. Since Bill Stokoe's reaffirmation that the gestures of deaf people are systematic, can communicate abstract and complex ideas and contain all the necessary requirements of a natural language, we have experienced a new "Age of Enlightenment." Bellugi and Klima (1972) recognized this when they wrote:

Sign Language, it is clear, is far more than mystical hand-waving. Its range and diversity permit humor and pun, song, and poetry, whimsy, and whispering . . . The study of sign gives us insight into the structure of language and the universality of communication, but even more it attests to the richness of human intelligence and imagination (pp. 60-64, 76).

Accepting the premise that the first systematic use of sign language in the education of deaf people was born during the Age of Enlightenment in the latter half of the eighteenth century and that after 200 years, beginning in the 60's, we are experiencing a new Age of Enlightenment in regard to the acceptance and use of sign language, I would like to share some perspectives on sign language instruction in our "Age of Enlightenment" with you. My comments will cover three general areas:

1. I will review sign language books of the past and present and comment on sign language instruction. I will comment on how the authors recommended these books be used and quote from some to give you a flavor of their times.
2. I will share with you my ideas regarding important attitudes for sign language teachers and students.
3. Finally, I will share my perspectives on the progress we have made in sign language instruction since about 1960 when our "Age of Enlightenment" began.

A Review of Sign Language Books Past to Present

My review of sign language books begins in France. De l'Epee's verbal descriptions of his methodological signs were published in 1896, over 100 years after his death. Harlan Lane, in his book, *When the Mind Hears*, describes how one idea would be expressed using Epee's methodological sign system.

Unintelligibility: The first sign announces an internal activity. The second represents the activity of someone who reads internally, that is, who understands what is said to him. The third declares that this arrangement is possible. Doesn't that give the word 'intelligible'? But with a fourth sign transforming this adjective into an abstract quality, isn't 'intelligibility' the result? Finally, by a fifth sign, adding negation, do we not have the entire word "unintelligibility?" (Lane, 1984, pp. 61-62).

Sicard, Epee's successor, reformed the methodological sign system. Instead of basing his signs on the Latin roots of French words, Sicard in *Theory of Signs*, 1808, based his signs on the combination of concepts that any particular word represents. Sounds good, but it wasn't as simple as it sounds. This is how the sign for "Providence" was described and expressed in Sicard's system:

Make the signs for all living things, be they vegetable or animal, receiving life and all that preserves it. Depict an

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immense being, occupying all space, looking down with care and concern on all living things so that none will perish through disregard. Compare this benevolent being with a mother whose heart looks after her son whom she has been forced to send far from home. Represent manually all the daily miracles of Providence which commands the waters of the sky to moisten the earth, the sun to warm it, man to cultivate it, and which undertakes alone to make the trees fecund and the fields fertile. All of these details require only three signs that convey the high points, and they are: First, the signs of plants and animals, living; second, the Creator granting them, since they lack the essentials of life, all the daily blessings required for their survival; third, that eternal eye discovering all needs, as would be caring mother, leaving none unsatisfied (Sicard, 1808, pp. 217-218).

Obviously these sign systems were very complex. Lane observes that, for example, the sentence "To the smallest of the birds, He gives their crumbs," required 48 signs (Lane, 1984, p. 62)!

The first dictionary of French Sign Language was written by a deaf poet, Pierre Pelissier, in 1856. This dictionary documented the, so called, "reduced" signs actually used by deaf people. Thus, this can be considered the first true dictionary of a natural sign language (Lane, 1984).

In the same year, 1856, James S. Brown published the first dictionary of signs in the United States, *A Vocabulary of Mute Signs*, printed by the Baton Rouge, Louisiana, newspaper, *The Morning Comet* (Schein, 1984). In this same period, L. M. Lambert published dictionaries of French signs in 1865 and 1870.

After Brown's 1856 book, the next published dictionary in the United States documenting the signs of the American deaf population was W. P. Clark's *The Indian Sign Language* published in 1885. This book was primarily concerned with describing the sign language of Native Americans but it also included descriptions of the "Deaf Mute" sign equivalents for each entry.

The next dictionary of American signs was by J. Schuyler Long. Published in 1909, it was entitled *The Sign Language: A Manual of Signs*. This book included both written descriptions and pictures.

Long's introduction includes the following passages explaining why he wrote the book and giving us insight regarding how people should learn sign language:

The work is not presented with the idea that persons unfamiliar with the deaf or their language can take it up and therefrom master the art of communicating in the language of pantomime and understand its peculiarities. But it is believed that those who have had some experience with the deaf and have opportunities to see the signs made will find it easy to follow the instructions given. As with all other languages, so with this language, ease and familiarity in its use and the mastery of its idiom come only by long practice and association with those to whom it is most familiar (Long, 1909).

Commenting further on the demise of sign language in the education of deaf students in the early twentieth century, Long writes:

The sign language is not now used as a means in the education of the deaf to so great an extent as during the

early years of the work. And in no school is it taught as was formerly the case. Its use in schools for the deaf at present is confined to chapel and religious exercises, in the social gatherings of pupils and on the playground (Long, 1909).

John W. Michaels' *Handbook of the Sign Language* and Daniel D. Higgins' *How to Talk to the Deaf* were both published in 1923. These books were published by religious organizations. Michaels was a Baptist and Higgins a Catholic. As in the previous quotation from Long, we see the influence of religion on the preservation of sign language during this period.

Here are a few words from Michaels' book to give you a flavor of his time:

During the last half century, new methods have been introduced in teaching the deaf, especially the *pure oral* and *lip reading method*, which is but another and more difficult sign-language expressed by the vocal organs and the movement of the lips. This method requires a great deal of patience and time to learn and in the end proves of little, if any, benefit to the learners. They (the deaf) say that their peculiar utterances can not be understood by the hearing people, and that it is difficult for them (the deaf) to understand the rapid movements of the lips of the hearing people and they become so much discouraged . . .

. . . the orally taught deaf people, omitting those who became partly deaf from disease, are usually behind in educational matters, compared with those who were educated by the *combined system*, i.e., where signs and the method best adapted to the individual are used. Not one out of a hundred, and we might say, out of a thousand of the orally taught deaf persons can read the sermons or addresses delivered from the rapidly moving lips from the pulpit or the platform. Therefore, the sign-language and the manual alphabet are used in the chapels for all religious sermons and lectures for the deaf (Michaels, 1923).

It was during this period, you may be aware, that sign language was being suppressed and deaf teachers were being systematically excluded from our educational institutions (Moore, 1978, p. 24). It seems the educational establishment was willing to sacrifice the minds of deaf people but the religious establishment would not release their souls.

Following this period, few new sign language books were published until the early 1960's. Long's book, however, was reprinted six times, in 1918, 1944, 1949, 1952, 1958 and 1959.

The 1960's might be considered the birth decade for our new "Age of Enlightenment," the beginning of our modern age of sign language research resulting in renewed interest in sign language. Stokoe published his *Sign Language Structure* in 1960 followed by the *Dictionary of American Sign Language* in 1965.

C. S. Springer, a Catholic priest, updated and revised Higgins' book and published *Talking with the Deaf* in 1961. In 1963, three popular texts were published. Among these were Dr. Lottie Riekehof's *Talk to the Deaf* and David Watson's *Talk With Your Hands*. This latter book has special significance for me because it was given to me by a student at the Texas School for the Deaf and, therefore, became my first "gospel" of sign language. The third book of note, published in 1963, was by Roger M. Falberg. His *The Language of Silence* was the first instructional book to discuss the "gram-

mar" of sign language. He was obviously influenced by Bill Stokoe's historic monograph mentioned earlier.

Other significant texts of the 60's were Fant's *Say It With Hands* in 1964 and as stated earlier, Stokoe's *Dictionary of American Sign Language* in 1965.

The 70's and 80's have seen a virtual explosion of sign books and materials. The highest selling sign dictionary of all time, *A Basic Course in Manual Communication* by T. J. O'Rourke, was published in 1970. One of the first books to go beyond the basics of vocabulary instruction was *Conversational Sign Language II* by Willard Madsen. Lou Fant published his classic *Ameslan* in 1972, *Sign Language* in 1977, *Intermediate Sign Language* in 1980 and his latest, *The American Sign Language Phrase Book*, in 1983. David Watson revised and expanded his *Talk With Your Hands*, published two volumes in 1973. Barbara Babbini produced what could be considered the first curriculum for sign instruction, *Manual Communication: A Course Study Outline for Instructors and Students*, in 1973. Finally, Lottie Riekehof published one of the most popular dictionaries of the 70's, *Joy of Signing*, in 1978.

During this same period with the advent of Total Communication in the schools and renewed acceptance of signing in the classroom, the invented English sign systems such as SEE 1, SEE 2 and the Gallaudet Pre-school Signed English System got their starts.

The 80's have seen us move as a profession beyond teaching by the individual sign approach, sometimes affectionately called our "traditional method." We have recognized that we are language teachers. We are beginning now to apply modern second language teaching methods in our instruction. This is reflected in our materials. Lou Fant led the way in the 70's, but the first truly comprehensive curriculum of American Sign Language awaited this decade with the publication of the *American Sign Language Curriculum* by Dennis Cokely and Charlotte Baker in 1980. In 1984, the first instructionally detailed curriculum, *Basic Sign Communication*, was published by this author and several other National Technical Institute for the Deaf sign instructors.

In the 1980's we have seen more sign language books and materials published than in all the time prior to this period. There are numerous other sign books which I haven't the space to mention here. We not only have the print medium but countless videotapes and films at our disposal. It is, in my own estimation, the best time to be a sign language instructor.

Attitudes for Sign Language Teachers and Students

I would like to use two passages from Harlan Lane's insightful book, *When the Mind Hears*, to address important attitudes for sign language teachers and students. These passages provide us with poignant examples of attitudes toward sign language instruction which we can emulate. They depict my own attitude toward this profession.

I should explain that in Dr. Lane's book, Laurent Clerc narrates the history of the education of deaf people from his perspective, that is, the perspective of a deaf person. The following passages reflect the thoughts of Clerc as researched and described by Lane (1984).

It was the Abbe de l'Epee, son of the King's architect,

who first turned to the poor, despised, illiterate deaf and said, "Teach me." And this act of humility gained him everlasting glory. It is his true title to our gratitude, for in becoming the student of his pupils, in seeking to learn their signs, he equipped himself to educate them and to found the education of the deaf (Lane, 1984, p. 63).

In another passage, Lane has Clerc explaining his first meeting with Thomas Hoskins Gallaudet.

I have found such a record of my first meeting with Thomas. We discussed our families in English—mine broken; I had taken a few lessons before going to London. I said: "I have one brother and two sisters but they are not deaf." Thomas asked if I read the Bible ("I know it by heart, since Sicard is a priest," I answered in French), and I asked if the Americans loved Napoleon ("We do not know much of the politics of Europe," he answered.) "There is a great deal of wickedness in this city," Thomas told me. "Particularly the women. I am sorry to see so many fine young girls going to destruction." We discussed Sicard's age and the trades of the deaf and dumb. I taught Thomas a few signs (GOOD, BETTER, BEST, MAN, WOMAN, FRIEND). I tried to explain the difference between French Sign Language and Manual French but I didn't do it very well; the former I called "natural," the latter "conventional." That could hardly be helpful, since all societies' languages are natural and they all involve conventions. Much of our conversations at that meeting and the many to follow, however, concerned life in American and especially the people and events in Hartford that had led to our fateful encounter (Lane, 1984, p. 162).

How do these passages depict attitudes toward sign language and deaf people for teachers and students? In the first, we see what I feel is the appropriate attitude of a teacher. The Abbe de l'Epee, the person whom most would acknowledge as the father of the education of deaf people, begins as a student tutored in the language of signs by two deaf sisters and numerous of his pupils after them. Epee, a hearing man, began with a fascination for sign language, a respect for deaf people as language users and the insight that these gestures could be used in their education. The teacher, as student, is the example of the Abbe de l'Epee.

In the second passage, we see two men, Laurent Clerc and Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, two equals learning from each other, fascinated with and enthusiastic to learn each other's language and culture. Here we see two men with what is called in second language teaching theory, "integrative motivation." They respect each other. They wish to learn from each other. They have the motivation to learn each other's language in order to integrate as much as possible with each other's culture. This is the bilingual ideal. It would be wonderful if significant numbers of teachers of deaf children could approach their profession with this same attitude of respect. We would have fewer deaf children graduating from our schools functionally illiterate. It was not always so. Clerc and his contemporaries attest to that. Possibly our new "Age of Enlightenment" will lead us back to an age of literacy for deaf people based on functional skill in both American Sign Language and English. It is clear why Clerc learned English and Gallaudet learned sign language so rapidly. Integrative motivation, based on mutual respect, promotes rapid acquisition of a language.

In summary, my perspective is that as sign language teachers, we must be first students of sign language. Whether we are deaf or hearing, as language teachers, we must be constantly striving to learn more about the language we are teaching and the language of our students. We can use that first meeting of Clerc and Gallaudet as our example. And we can use the attitude of respect for each other and our languages as shown by Thomas and Laurent as the basis of our own approach to teaching sign language.

We indeed have come a long way in the last 18 years. I began learning sign language in 1969 as a houseparent at the Texas School for the Deaf. The Communicative Skills Program (CSP) of the NAD was only just beginning. CSP was charged with setting up pilot sign language classes across the United States. From these pioneering efforts, our field has virtually exploded. We have seen a tremendous increase in sign language dictionaries and sign instruction materials. Interest in ASL and deafness has been stimulated over much the same period by the world famous performances of the National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD) and a significant increase in exposure to sign language and deafness through the mass media. Since Bill Stokoe's pioneering efforts, through continuing research, we have also seen a tremendous growth in our knowledge of sign language. The number of sign language classes offered in almost every city in the United States has grown dramatically during the last 20 years. Delgado's (1984) survey of junior college programs alone estimated that there were 30,000 students taking sign language in 1984. This is only a fraction of the total number which includes adult and community education programs, YMCA, church programs and numerous other settings. In the latest estimate, over 300 college programs offer sign language instruction with 12 colleges and universities accepting sign language in fulfillment of language requirements (*Reflector*, 1984). Included in this list are such prestigious schools as Harvard, MIT, American University, Brown, UC Berkeley, the University of Minnesota and the University of New Mexico.

It is 108 years since participants at the infamous Conference of Milan in 1880 attempted to wipe sign language from the face of the earth. It took nearly 85 years for sign language to begin again to be recognized as a legitimate language and to again be used in the education of deaf students. During this 85-year period, however, sign language flourished among deaf people even if suppressed by the educational establishment.

In 1977, I was privileged to attend the first national Symposium on Sign Language Research and Teaching (NSSLRT). I attended and presented at the sign language symposia in 1978, 1980 and 1986. These prestigious conferences sponsored by the National Association of the Deaf are a hallmark of our "Age of Enlightenment." The last 15 to 20 years has seen a dramatic increase in recognition of ASL and its place in the educational and social lives of deaf people. The next step is to increase the number of deaf people who are teaching in and in charge of our educational institutions for the deaf. We must restore the pre-Milan collaboration between deaf and hearing educators. We should see Epee's respect for his

students' innate abilities and Clerc and Gallaudet's respect for each other as our models.

I believe we are in a new Age of Enlightenment. I hope you will agree.

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Is There a "Psychology of the Deaf"?

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I have reviewed recently much of the scientific literature on the "psychology of the deaf" from the last few decades, some 350 journal articles and books. Frequently, I read statements such as the following from the *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry*: "Suspiciousness . . . as well as impulsive and aggressive behaviors have been reported as typical of deaf adults . . . Recent reports tend to confirm these judgments" [1]. A widely-cited summary of the literature on the "psychology of the deaf" finds "rigidity, emotional immaturity, social ineptness." [2]

I have assembled a list of the good and bad characteristics of

deaf people according to the experts whose books and articles I read. Each time I came on a characteristic of deaf people according to the experts, I wrote it down. In the end I had a very long list. I eliminated terms that meant the same thing, arranged the rest into four groups, and alphabetized them. The list appears in Figure 1. It is a disturbing list—all the more so as these descriptions come from studies published in professional journals, studies that say they used impartial scientific testing with well-known tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), the Rorschach Test and others.

Figure 1

Some traits attributed to deaf people in the professional literature

SOCIAL	COGNITIVE	BEHAVIORAL	EMOTIONAL
Admiration depends on	Conceptual thinking poor	Aggressive	Anxiety lack of
Asocial	Concrete	Androgynous	Depressive
Clannish	Doubting	Conscientious	Emotionally disturbed
Competitive	Egocentric	Hedonistic	Emotionally immature
Credulous	Failure externalized	Immature	Empathy lack of
Disobedient	Failure internalized	Impulsive	Explosive
Conscience weak	Insight poor	Initiative lacking	Frustrated easily
Dependent	Introspection none	Interests few	Irritable
Immature	Language none	Motor development slow	Moody
Irresponsible	Language poor	Personality undeveloped	Neurotic
Isolated	Mechanically inept	Possessive	Paranoid
Morally undeveloped	Naive	Rigid	Passionate
Role-rigid	Reasoning restricted	Shuffling gait	Psychotic reactions
Shy	Self-awareness poor	Stubborn	Serious
Submissive	Shrewd	Suspicious	Tempermental
Suggestible	Thinking unclear	Unconfident	Unfeeling
Unsocialized	Unaware		
	Unintelligent		

This is how the experts portray deaf children and adults to the young men and women who are in training to become their teachers, counselors, doctors and so on. The list describes the deaf client that the experienced practitioner imagines is seated across the table: socially isolated, intellectually weak, behaviorally impulsive, emotionally immature.

The list of traits attributed to deaf people is inconsistent: they are both "aggressive" and "submissive"; "naive/shrewd, detached/passionate, explosive/shy, stubborn/submissive, suspicious/trusting." The list is, however, consistently negative: nearly all of the traits ascribed, even many in pairs of opposites, are unfavorable. Clearly we must wonder whether the "psychology of the deaf" consists of solid scientific find-

ings or whether it consists of hearing stereotypes about deaf people. Is there a body of scientific knowledge concerning the psychology of deaf children and adults? Are the trait attributions trustworthy? Can we select students, develop curricula, prepare teaching materials, train teachers, design environments and so on based on this information?

My examination of the studies from which the trait attributions were taken reveals many serious flaws. Test *administration* is frequently unclear and unreliable; test *language* is commonly incomprehensible to the testee; test *scoring* is undependable, subjective and easily influenced by the prejudices of the examiner; test *reliability*—the agreement between raters and the consistency of each rater, is suspect or very low; test *valid-*

ity—the proof that the test really measures what it claims to measure—is usually lacking and generally doubtful; test *content* is unrelated to deaf experience and schooling; test *norms* are nonexistent or inappropriate; finally, *subject populations* are inadequately characterized.

The first problem with administering tests to deaf children and adults, according to some investigations, is *set*: The deaf person taking the test may be unfamiliar with the procedures and format of standardized testing: reading items on the test form, encoding them as letters or numbers, marking responses on a separate answer sheet, self-pacing, following printed directions. However sophisticated deaf clients may be in test taking generally, they cannot know what is required by the particular test confronting them; they are commonly baffled and the examiner is forced somehow to convey what needs to be done without dropping any hints on how to do it. Some specialists believe that group testing of deaf people is ruled out by the dual problems of *set* and communication. The examiner commonly resorts to pantomime invented on the spot which is undependable, often unclear and incomplete. Hearing people lose about five IQ points when given pantomime instructions for taking an IQ test. The hearing psychologist with a deaf client is damned either way: If he (or she) uses pantomime, the score will be misleadingly low; if he uses English, he probably will not be understood and the score will be even less valid. The manner of administering IQ tests to deaf people can account for a change of 30 IQ points.

Consistent and clear administration of personality tests is even more of a problem. For example, when the Sixteen Personality Factor test was given to deaf people using elementary English and again using sign language, the results were so different that the investigators concluded it was like giving two different tests. Psychologists who want to give tests designed for hearing people to their deaf clients have a big problem: If they change the procedures and language so the deaf person understands the test, then they can't compare the results to those obtained with hearing people. But if they don't adapt the test for their deaf clients, the deaf persons' scores do not present a true picture.

The psychologist responsible for the most widely-cited test results on the mental health of deaf people, the results coming from the New York State Psychiatric Institute in the 1960s, frankly expresses his wonder that his patients were never irritable with his primitive signing as he went about trying to give them the Rorschach Test and the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). It is difficult to know whether the testees understand the instructions or not. Many simply describe what is in the TAT picture, rather than make up a story based on the picture as they are supposed to.

Since deaf clients in America are often not totally fluent in English, they not only fail to understand test instructions thoroughly, invalidating the results, but they also fail to understand the test content itself, as most tests are presented in written English, and in rather high-level English at that. Nevertheless, psychologists continue to administer such tests to deaf subjects, to report the peculiar results in scientific journals and to misclassify deaf children as, for example, learning disabled. An item analysis of deaf and hearing

responses on the Stanford Achievement Test found 26 items markedly biased against deaf students and these all fell into six categories of language use: conditionals (if, when); comparatives; negatives (not, without); inferentials (should, could, because, since); pronouns (it, something); and long passages. Reading level is mostly responsible for the student's score in all the academic areas of the test.

Likewise, it comes as no surprise to learn from reports of the Educational Testing Service that deaf students score lower on the verbal Scholastic Aptitude Test than all handicapped groups, lower even than the learning disabled. Eighty-five percent have lower scores than the average hearing applicant. Of course, this is not an accurate measure of the aptitude of deaf high school students, as their high scores on nonverbal IQ tests remind us. In fact, the Scholastic Aptitude Test does not predict the scholastic achievement of deaf students, who outperform its sorry predictions. Nonetheless, the test is widely used with deaf students. The situation is analogous to giving an immigrant, whose primary language is not English, a verbal test battery or interview in English—test scores might well show mental retardation or psychosis. American authorities on Ellis Island used this method to label as idiots and reject large numbers of immigrants arriving from Southern Europe earlier in this century.

The outcomes of many personality tests are even more dependent on the English-language skills of the deaf subjects. One authority estimates that the testee must have a tenth-grade knowledge of English to take most personality tests meaningfully. Yet the average deaf school leaver has only a fourth grade command of English, and only one deaf student in ten reads at eighth grade level or better. Even if merely a fourth grade reading level is necessary, half of the test respondents must frequently be answering on whim. Then we must reject the results of most personality testing done with deaf people, and with it much of the unfavorable attributions in Figure 1.

To illustrate the problem of test comprehension, consider the responses of a profoundly deaf thirteen-year-old, performance IQ 107, who took the Maudsley Medical questionnaire twice, at twelve months' interval.

1. Do you find it difficult to get into conversation with strangers? (1st administration: Yes / second: No)
2. Have you ever been troubled by a stammer or stutter? (N/Y)
3. Do you have nightmares? (Y/N)
4. Are you an irritable person? (Y/Y)
5. Do you ever get short of breath without doing heavy work? (Y/Y) (reported the football player)
6. What are you going to be when you leave school? (16 years/Builders or joiners)

As psychologists at the University of California Center on Deafness recently concluded: "Questionnaires are not good instruments for the assessment of a deaf person's personality . . . We would not recommend [them]." [3]

Knowledgeable people agree that meaningful scoring of the TAT and the Rorschach requires an examiner fluent in sign language and informed about the communicative, cultural

and social aspects of deafness, a condition that is rarely fulfilled. Only 15 percent of a recent sample of service providers reported studies in deafness as a focus of their education.

Even more dependent on interpreting language nuances are clinical interviews and the diagnostic decisions and data that arise from them. Yet in the Illinois and New York projects on psychiatry and deaf adults only one deaf patient in four could make himself understood through speaking. How then is the diagnostician to distinguish the thought disorder of schizophrenia, with its hyper-verbal flow of disordered concepts, from the retardation of thought of psychotic depression, and from the pressure of talk in mania? Generally, hearing specialists cannot, and this has led them to misdiagnose deaf people, and to label deaf children and adults as emotionally disturbed or mentally ill without good evidence.

The Illinois project found depressive illness among deaf adults common, but the New York project found it rare. The former group interpreted all the depressive signs as evidence that deaf people generally internalize thoughts of failure; the New York group interprets the lack of depressive findings as evidence that deaf people generally externalize failure, attributing it to anything but themselves. Half of deaf psychiatric hospital admissions in the United States are for schizophrenia, a diagnosis rarely made with the Danish deaf who, however, are prone to paranoia, a rare diagnosis for deaf adults in America.

The psychological literature portrays deaf children and adults as commonly emotionally disturbed. Some psychiatrists believe that this emotional disturbance leads to frequent mental illness. But a majority of experts seems to contend that it does not, that deaf people do not differ from hearing people in the types and frequencies of their mental disorders. Somehow, the severely disturbed children become healthy adults. This is a happier view, and probably the one we should hold to in the absence of any good evidence one way or the other, but the fact remains that there is no reliable information on the incidence of mental illness in deaf people.

Many experts believe that deaf people cannot be normal in cognition and behavior; as one authority put it, "common sense considerations would suggest that the deaf would have an increased risk of developing schizophrenia." [4] This investigator is clearly biased, and most experiments with deaf children and adults are wide open to the charge of conscious or unconscious bias against deaf people. To aggravate the problem of bias, a child or adult who is acting up and who also does not respond to English commands represents a dual threat to the examiner, parent or teacher. When the assessment of the deaf person is subjective, as it is in ratings, checklists and interviews, a biased examiner can unwittingly influence the scores and therefore invalidate the results. Nevertheless, ratings, interviews and checklists are just the scoring methods used by tests such as the TAT, the Rorschach, the Vineland Social Maturity Scale, the Bender-Gestalt—and many more tests whose findings make up the literature on the "psychology of the deaf." Most studies not only use these kinds of measures, but also fail to concern themselves with the problem of bias, and fail to take the elementary precaution where possible of "blind" administration and scoring.

Although teacher ratings are widely used in the "psychology of the deaf," the research of Rosenthal and colleagues has long led psychologists to expect examiner bias in teacher ratings. In a famous study with hearing teachers and pupils, the teachers were told untruthfully that a certain 20 percent of their students were gifted and ready to bloom intellectually. Actually, those children's names were selected at random by the experimenter. Later, the teachers were asked to evaluate all their pupils. As it turned out, they rated the so-called gifted ones superior to their classmates in personal qualities such as cooperativeness and adjustment, although the children singled out had been chosen at random.

Teachers of deaf children nationwide frequently label their pupils as having an "emotional/behavioral problem," a "specific learning disability" and "mental retardation"; they report nearly a third of their students have a handicapping condition beyond deafness. A British study of all deaf high school leavers, however, found that only one deaf child in ten really had an additional handicapping condition. One researcher evaluated the 51 deaf children transferred to a special school for the mentally ill and found one-third of them were improperly referred and simply a little difficult to manage in their regular schoolroom.

A classic study of one American school for deaf children reported that 23 percent of the children were considered to have "severe psychiatric problems," while another 21 percent were "poorly adjusted"—44 percent in all. The highest incidence of emotional disturbance among deaf school children was reported by one (anonymous) teacher who sent her entire class to a team of psychologists for therapy. Clearly, "disturbed" to the teacher frequently means "disturbing to the classroom."

More evidence that teachers are biased when making ratings of their students can be found in their overreporting of emotional disturbances for Black students and signing students, and in the wildly fluctuating rates of emotional disturbance reported by teacher in the different states of the union—from 2 to 28 percent in schools of comparable size. To quote one authority: "Both the fiscal climate and the organization of human services [in each state] affect the process of identification and labelling," [5].

It is widely recognized that teachers of deaf pupils, as a distinguished investigator has put it, carry a "tremendous emotional load . . . Often their frustration, impatience and anger can create additional classroom problems." [6] Parents of deaf children "feel powerless and become increasingly angry and shrill." [7] Only one parent in ten could communicate with his or her deaf child in one school for the deaf that was studied, but there is good evidence that the more parents can communicate with their deaf child, the better their opinion of the child. Is it reasonable then to have confidence in teacher or parent ratings of the deaf child's emotional disturbance? Shouldn't we demand some separate proof, besides the hearing person's subjective opinion?

Ratings are not only of doubtful validity but they are unreliable—raters often disagree. Much of the time parents do not agree with teachers or among themselves on their deaf children's emotional disturbance. Psychologists consider two

judges reliable if 95 times in 100 they independently conclude that a child has or has not a certain trait. They must not disagree more than five times in 100. One study found that mother and father disagree about 15 times in 100 whether their deaf child is emotionally disturbed; mother and teacher disagree 25 times in 100, and father and teacher disagree 40 times in 100. For most children, neither their mother's nor their father's opinion of their emotional disturbance agreed with the psychologist's test results. And teachers generally do not agree with each other about the emotional or behavioral problems of their deaf pupils; they so rarely agreed in one study that "these ratings had to be discarded." [8]

Scores are assigned to deaf children by teachers, examiners or parents using a rating scale; or the children themselves, unclear as to the procedures and the meanings of the questions, answers test items as best they can. Now their answers must be compared to the "right" answers to obtain a score, and the score must be compared to those of a large group of children or adults. But the "right" answers are right for hearing people and not necessarily for deaf people, and very few tests have ever been used with large numbers of deaf people, so there is no way to compare one person's score with an average. Personality tests, for example, contain questions that were designed to spot hearing people with personality problems. When the scoring system designed for hearing people is applied to deaf people, the results often have little validity. Many questions on the MMPI, for example, clearly assume the test taker is hearing ("I would like to be a singer"; "At times I hear so well it bothers me") while others are more subtly biased ("I enjoy reading love stories"; "In a group of people I would not be embarrassed to be called upon to start a discussion or give an opinion about something I know well"). Perhaps a fourth of the items are inappropriate. Should it count as paranoid if a deaf person confirms that "People often stare at me in restaurants" when indeed they do generally eye his signing?

Although it is a major source of the literature on the "psychology of the deaf," the MMPI suffers from all the invalidating weaknesses cited—difficult to administer, to read, to interpret, with content and norms inappropriate to deaf people. It should never have been used with this population, and certainly the results should not have been published. Nearly all of the other tests whose results make up the literature of the "psychology of the deaf" have likewise not been revised for and standardized on deaf populations.

Finally, I will note that the research on the "psychology of the deaf" commonly fails to describe and distinguish its subject populations. Instead, average results are reported for groups made up of very different kinds of deaf people. Deaf people differ in sex, age, race and social class; in the cause, extent and nature of their hearing loss; in the age at which their hearing became impaired; in the hearing status of their parents; in the mode of communication used at school, at home and with peers; the type of schooling received; their command of oral and written English; their membership in minority groups; in whether they had physical or mental handicaps prior to and following deafness; in their families' histories of mental health.

The common failure to select subjects on these characteristics ruins experiments in two ways. If a sample of deaf people contains all these different kinds of deaf people, it becomes unlikely that differences between deaf and hearing subjects can be discovered that are large relative to the average differences among individuals within the two groups; thus there can be no confidence in the apparent difference between hearing and deaf subjects if one is uncovered.

Second, if the experimenter does not know what kinds of deaf people gave him his results, he does not know to which kinds of deaf people his results apply. He cannot generalize about his findings. Clearly, research that fails to distinguish these characteristics of its test population is uninterpretable and without value for educational policy even if the tests themselves were appropriate for deaf clients.

Because the literature on the "psychology of the deaf" has all these serious weaknesses in test administration, language, scoring, content, norms and subject groups, many in the professions serving deaf people have sounded the alarm that the field is improperly lending the weight of science to common stereotypes. For example, an article in the *Journal of Rehabilitation of the Deaf* recently stated: "Professionals who work closely with deaf people have responded to the inconsistencies between these biases [of the research] and their own experience with deaf people by writing off the whole field of testing." [9]

Some deaf people to whom I have shown the list in Figure 1 have told me that it is natural for deaf children to be disturbed, when you consider how long most were frustrated in their efforts to communicate with parents and teachers. Parents who refuse to adapt to their deaf children and teachers that refuse to learn and use sign language are responsible, they say, for the abnormal thinking and behavior of deaf children. But before we debate explanations, however, we should be sure we have something to explain. We must have tests that are designed for deaf people from top to bottom, from administration to content; we must have tests that provide reliable and valid measures of the thinking and behavior of deaf children and adults; we must have evidence of the performance of large groups of deaf subjects of all kinds so that any individual's score can be evaluated with respect to the larger population. This is just what we do not have.

There is no "psychology of the deaf." It is, in fact, not clear that there *can* be one. Of course, there are interesting things to be learned and reported about deaf culture, deaf language and deaf people; the same might be said about many minorities. Yet such an enterprise is not a "psychology" of the minority. We do not have a psychology of Blacks or a psychology of Mexican-Americans and the term "psychology of women" may well be a misnomer.

How did psychological research with deaf people go so badly astray? Hearing experts, often ignorant of the language, institutions, culture, history, mores, experiences of deaf people could only be guided by stereotypes—stereotypes like deaf people are isolated, think best concretely, are immature and so on. If the research suffers critically from ignorance of deaf people, then the solution is to involve deaf people themselves at all levels of the research undertaking. We must plan a strategy to recruit and train many more deaf principal investiga-

tors. We must turn preferentially to the deaf community for advisors and collaborators in research design and implementation, for assistance in data collection and analysis and for guidance in interpretation of results.

This type of collaboration between hearing and deaf scholars Laurent Clerc called "a useful employment." His diary of his trip to America with Thomas Gallaudet states: "Mornings we spent in useful employment. Mr. Gallaudet taught me the English language, and I taught him the language of signs."

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Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor:

This is to call your attention to an error on page 10 of Volume 38, No. 2, of *THE DEAF AMERICAN* regarding ASL laws. On lines 16 and 17 of page 1, you state that Michigan, followed by California, were first to recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language.

The Michigan law became effective in February 1987 and the California law in July 1987. Please note from the enclosed copy of the Oklahoma ASL law that it became effective July 1, 1982, some five years earlier.

With all due respect to our sister states, Oklahoma lays claim to this nation's oldest current ASL law. Please note same in a future issue of the DA.

And while we are on our soap box, let it be known that Oklahoma got there second (California beat us by one month) with her statewide message relay service. We cannot be sure of the order of TDD distribution programs, but Oklahoma wasn't too far behind the leader either.

—Charles C. Estes, Secretary

Oklahoma Association of the Deaf
Text of the Oklahoma ASL law:

Dear Editor:

Belatedly, I wish to respond to John Spellman's review of Lou Ann Walker's *A Loss for Words* (*THE DEAF AMERICAN* Vol. 38, # 2). I do not agree that Ms. Walker presented an "underlying, morose view of deafness and the Deaf." I felt that Ms. Walker wrote of her family experiences with warmth, respect, and pride—while at the same time she wrote of her New York City interpreting experiences with (albeit depressing) candor.

As a social worker with inner city/disadvantaged deaf persons, I have seen numerous clients struggle through the court system—young men facing incarceration and young mothers losing custody of their children. Deaf school leavers (especially those of minority status) engage in futile searches for a good job—and then become entrapped in the welfare (SSI) cycle. Others have substance abuse problems, mental illness, or mental retardation. Deafness inevitably compounds such situations.

The deaf "intelligensia" rarely illustrate this difficult side of deafness. The professionals that get the most intensive exposure to this kind of deaf experience are the interpreters. Because of role restrictions and confidentiality requirements, interpreters rarely acknowledge what they see. I was grateful to Ms. Walker for putting pen to paper and illuminating this for us all.

—Doris A. Stelle, LCSW
Silver Spring, Maryland

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What Is Sign Language?

By Christine Wixtrom

That's a good question! There are many types of gestural communication, and sometimes the term "sign language" just doesn't make it clear which form is being discussed. Here are a few brief explanations to help clear up the confusion.

FINGERSPELLING, OR THE MANUAL ALPHABET

Fingerspelling is a method of representing the letters of the alphabet with the hand. Forming different shapes with your hand, you can spell out words such as: "H-O-W A-R-E Y-O-U?" Manual alphabets are **not** languages; they are visual codes for languages. The one-handed American Manual Alphabet is a code for English. (A two-handed manual alphabet is used in Europe.) There are different manual alphabets used to code different languages.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE, OR AMESLAN, OR ASL

ASL is a visual-gestural **language**. ASL developed in a natural manner, as a means of clear visual communication used among deaf people. ASL was created by deaf people and belongs to their culture, Deaf Culture. Today, ASL is used by approximately one-half million deaf Americans and Canadians of all ages. The units of ASL are composed of specific movements of the hands and arms, eyes, face, head and body posture. These movements, or gestures, represent concepts and serve as the "words" of the language. Precise syntactical rules and grammatical principles dictate proper ASL "word" (sign) order, tense indicators, intonation and other aspects of ASL language use. The grammar of ASL is completely different from (and unrelated to) the grammar of the English language. Linguistic research has shown, however, that ASL is as "rich" and "complete" as any spoken language.

MANUALLY CODED ENGLISH

There are a number of signing systems that were artificially devised in order to teach English to deaf children. MCE sys-

tems use manual signs to represent English visually. Signs used in these systems may be taken from ASL, but these vocabulary units are used to represent English words (rather than to represent concepts, as they do in ASL). Some new signs are contrived (invented) for English words or word parts in these systems. All signs are used in English grammatical order. Thus, these forms of manual communication are **not languages**—they are **systems**. Using one of these manual systems along with spoken English is a **method** of communication called "simultaneous communication" (or "sim-com"). Some MCE systems: Seeing Essential English (SEE1), Signing Exact English (SEE2), Linguistics of Visual English (LOVE) and Signed English (Bornstein, et al.).

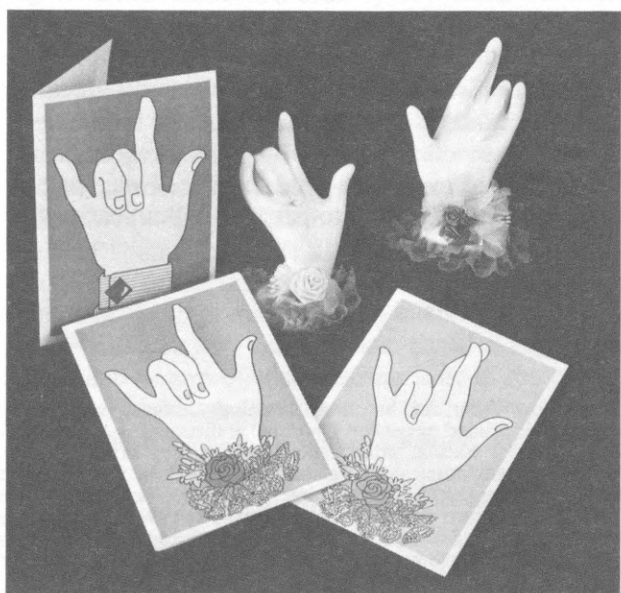
PIDGIN SIGN ENGLISH (PSE)

When some ASL signs, some newer signs, some contrived signs and fingerspelling are used in flexible grammatical order, this is referred to as Pidgin Sign English. PSE is not a structured system, but a natural mix of two languages, ASL and English. One of the varieties within this category is Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE). Users of CASE will choose a sign on the basis of its meaning in ASL, rather than on the basis of its sound or spelling in English. The signs are used in English grammatical order, and may be accompanied by English mouth movements.

PANTOMIME

Pantomime is **not** "sign language." Pantomime is not a language at all. Pantomime includes motions, gestures and dramatics used to communicate. It is used in theatre, and between people who do not share a common language.

References: 1) *ASL: A Look At Its History, Structure, and Community*, by Charlotte Baker/Carol Padden 2) *Sign Language Interpreting: A Basic Resource Book*, by Sharon N. Solow 3) *ASL: Fact and Fancy*, by Harry Markowicz.



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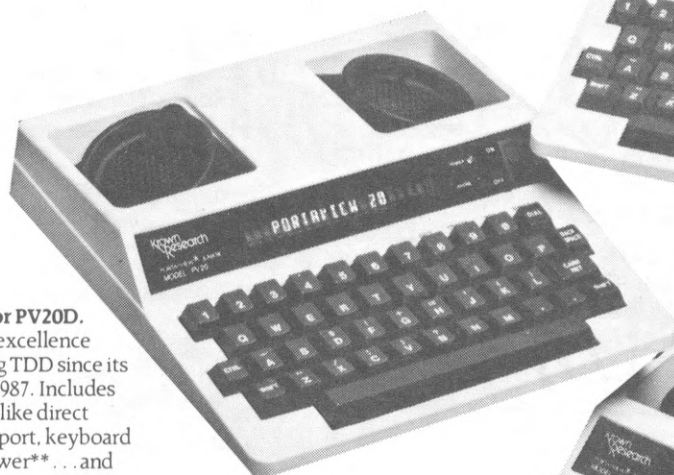
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Tiny Indiana Ghost Town Named In Honor Of Thomas H. Gallaudet

Tucked away in the southeast corner of Marion County, Indiana, now a part of the Indianapolis "Unigov" area, there was a town named in honor of America's foremost pioneer in the education of the deaf, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet.

Never more than a way station on a local railway line, the town's origin was shrouded in mystery. Many local people wondered about the name and the history of an abandoned sawmill, the town's only reason for being.

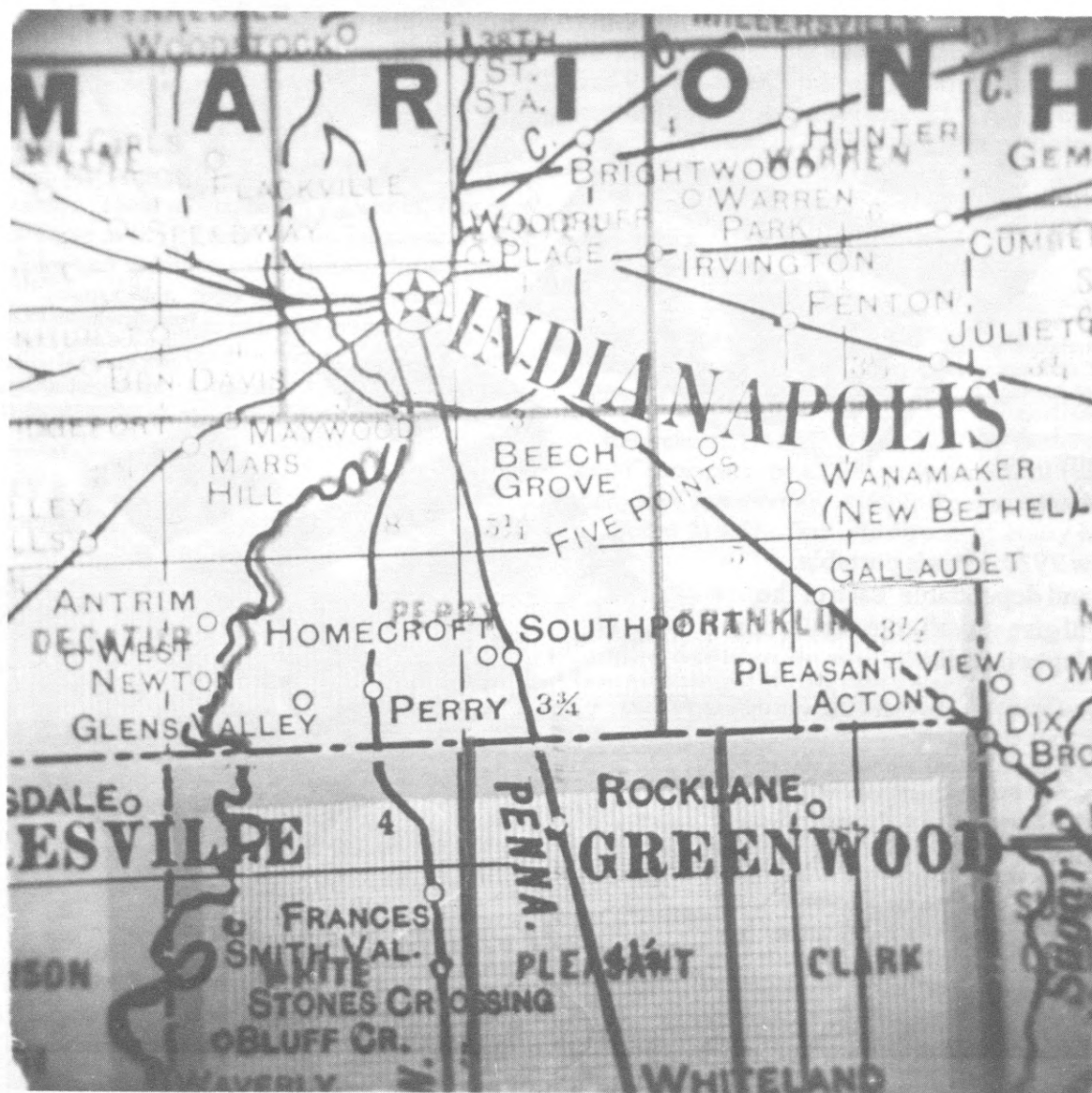
It wasn't until Charley Whisman, a retired teacher at the Indiana School for the Deaf, browsing through back copies of *The Silent Hoosier*, the school's paper, came across an item in the October 1894, issue that the mystery was solved.

James S. Brown, who was superintendent of the Indiana

School from 1845 to 1853, bought a heavily timbered farm at the Franklin Road crossing of the old Big Four Railroad about nine miles from the city. There he erected a sawmill and started a town, naming it in honor of his co-worker, Gallaudet.

Circumstances surrounding the failure of the mill to get into production are not known, but not a foot of lumber was ever sawed in the mill, which stood empty and useless until it rotted away. Residents in the area remember the train from Indianapolis dropped off and picked up mail forenoon and afternoon, but eventually even this distinction was abandoned.

New subdivisions have overrun the once rural area. As the population grows, it would be fitting to perpetuate Gallaudet's memory in a school, post office or subdivision.



A Deaf Perspective Of Interpreters

By Suzanne Hunt Sapienza

A deaf man enters a business meeting. He makes acquaintance with the interpreter and discusses the logistics of the situation. The meeting commences and he watches the events of the meeting transpire across the face of the interpreter. The deaf man either participates or he doesn't and ultimately the meeting comes to an end. The interpreter leaves the meeting, perhaps thinking about the subject matter or a particularly difficult concept. The deaf man leaves the meeting and also contemplates the experience. The images of the interpreter's face and hands reverberate across his mind as he recalls important facts and details. He is also concerned about the interpreter's performance: His understanding is only as efficient as the interpretation. Did the interpreter satisfy his needs?

The interpreting profession is extremely subjective, and the requirements of each client may be inordinately diverse. A deaf individual who works in the professional arena may request an interpreter who will complement his professional image. Another individual who works in a less professional environment may be less concerned about image. Maybe comprehension is a more important factor for him. Although a deaf individual's needs of an interpreter are directly related to his language and professional requirements, the deaf community as a whole, is most essentially concerned with sign-to-voice (reverse) interpreting, facial expression and the ethical and professional behavior demonstrated by the interpreter.



Suzanne Hunt Sapienza is a graduate of the Interpreter for the Deaf program at Phoenix College, Arizona. She works part time as a free lance interpreter and is a member of National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. She served the Valley of the Sun Registry of Interpreters in Phoenix as editor for the bimonthly newsletter and as a member of the board. She is currently living in Denver and pursuing a General Writing degree at the University of Colorado.

The Interviews

Interviews were conducted with 12 deaf people to evaluate the interpreting service they receive. These specifically selected interviewees fell into three balanced categories according to language needs: American Sign Language (ASL), Sign English and Pidgin Signed English (a varied mixture of ASL and Signed English). Professional requirements were also taken into consideration and these same individuals regrouped to form evenly distributed categories of professional, clerical and activity type oriented jobs. The objective was to obtain an accurate sampling of the hearing impaired population.

Interview questions focused upon the deaf individuals' past experiences with interpreters as well as attitudes, preferences and priorities for service. What does the deaf community as a whole think of the interpreting profession and what aspect of the service do they deem most important? Components of performance such as signing style, fingerspelling fluency, professionalism, receptive skills, expression and extensive vocabulary were rated. Is there a factor of interpreting which has consistent priority, or do the deaf have individual preferences based on their lifestyles?

Sign-to-Voice Interpreting

Interviews with these 12 hearing impaired individuals indicate that the single most critical aspect of interpreting which deaf individuals are concerned with is sign-to-voice interpreting, or when the interpreter is replacing voice for the sign language. Only veteran interpreters have polished this more difficult skill and the deaf population feel the consequences. An interpreter with inadequate sign-to-voice skills will cause much frustration and embarrassment not only to the deaf, but the hearing persons involved as well.

Excessive hesitations, breaks and repetitions cause the barriers of the handicap to seem larger than necessary and bring an unpleasant feeling to the situation. Communication becomes a choppy, rough sequence of words and repetitions and the rapport which might have been developed between two people is never accomplished. Red faces and nervous smiles hurry the conversation to an end, leaving the deaf individual frustrated with unanswered questions, unspoken comments or unfinished business.

The desired effect is a smooth interaction so natural the interpreter is hardly noticed. Positive feelings are cultivated when the deaf individual satisfies his purpose for the meeting, and the hearing persons involved experience successful interaction. And as a result, the image of the deaf population is improved.

Hearing impaired individuals know that the interpreter is their window to the world; the translation of their signs and the effect the interpreter produces become their image. The interpreter acts as an extension of their being. In fact, one individual said that image was of such import that she would chose a friendly interpreter over a skilled one. Her reason was

straightforward: If the comfort factor is extended from the interpreter to the hearing participants in the group, then she feels a connection with the group and an improvement in the way they perceive her. She would prefer to accent merely satisfactory information in exchange for an enhanced positive image. Confidence and self-image are greatly increased when the individual's signs, expressions and almost transparent facial changes are interpreted appropriately. The hearing impaired want a smooth transition of the sign into voice and they want to participate with others in the group.

One concern which hinders group involvement is an interpreter with a timid, soft-spoken voice or one who is reluctant to interrupt. Sometimes the interpreter voices a comment very adequately, however so softly that no one can hear it or it is never acknowledged. The deaf feel shut out by an interpreter who is unwilling or unable to assertively interject their comments and ideas. Unfortunately, lag time, the few words an interpreter must work just behind the speaker, accounts for some of the participation problem. Often the meeting has jumped to a second topic before the deaf individual has "heard" the complete first topic, and the deaf individual finds himself trying to comment on a subject already closed. [Note: One interviewee suggested that if the hearing impaired individual were to make contact with the moderator prior to the meeting and explain the lag time problem, perhaps the moderator would be able to allow the individual a chance to comment before moving on to the next topic.] Another assertive interviewee stated that hearing people interrupt each other all the time and therefore he felt he should be allowed this same privilege. He becomes infuriated when an interpreter acts "polite" for him, by hesitating to interrupt. The interpreter is merely a vehicle, a means of communication, and if the client wishes to interrupt then the interpreter must do so. Disallowing a client his own selfsame rudeness is a breach of ethics and interpreters should be wary of interjecting even this unconscious control of the situation.

The desire for topnotch sign-to-voice interpreters and the concern of being unable to participate in interpreted group situations became the focus of most of the interviews. It seems the deaf want not only to be seen, but heard. They can only be "heard" through the efforts of their interpreter. Thus, a quality interpreter, one who can give them adequate voice, becomes top priority.

Expression

Facial and body expression were chosen as the second most important aspect of interpreting. It is interesting that expression was rated higher than sign vocabulary, fingerspelling or signing style, as these are the more tangible forms of the language. Emphasis fell on the importance of the slightest gesture and the most subtle glimpse of facial change. In some cases, these expressions transmit information faster and more clearly than vocabulary, and the deaf want and need this critical part of the language to be included in their interpretations. The facial expression provides personality, interest and flair.

A tip of the head, a raise of an eyebrow, a shrug of a shoulder. These forms of expression—forms of American Sign Language—are an integral part of interpreting. Without it,

the result is an endless stream of meaningless movement which is received in monotone and is the eventual cause of disinterest. The client falls asleep or into a daze and misses important information the rest of the group receives. Facial expression is the stimulating part of sign language and the interviewees overwhelmingly rated this component second in priority. Deaf individuals asked for the mood, feelings and emotion of the speaker to be conveyed in the translation.

Another comment related to expression was a dissatisfaction with the blank stare or "dead faced" interpreter, or one who becomes so bored with the situation that even the signs become "mumbled" and unclear. It is said that the eyes are the mirror of the soul. For the deaf, the interpreters eyes impart the speaker's personality, meaning and subtle nuances of character.

Ethical and Professional Behavior

The third major concern of the deaf community is a combined category of ethical and professional behavior demonstrated by the interpreter. Actually, few of the deaf individuals interviewed were aware that interpreters adhere to a common ethical standard, and those who had heard of the Code of Ethics did not know its content. A discussion with the interviewees about the major points of the rule produced considerable interest and an eagerness to know more about the guidelines for this service which is provided for them. Apparently there is a need for the deaf community members to understand what constitutes appropriate interpreter behavior. Naturally, an informed deaf community would be able to critique and more discriminately chose their interpreters.

Deaf individuals voiced specific ethical concerns about confidentiality and "chatty" interpreters. Complete trust in the interpreter, and his or her ability to keep facts and information confidential, is required. When trust is established, the client is able to relax and participate freely and naturally. The deaf also wish their interpreter to be available for interpreting during the entire appointment time, regardless of the activities which he himself may be involved in, such as filling out paper work, or taking a test. Deaf individuals are irritated with interpreters who chat with hearing individuals while on the job.

Concerns about professionalism brought out in the interviews were in the area of personality, dress and courtesy. Several hearing impaired individuals voiced a dislike of the cold, "inhuman" interpreter. This unfriendly mask may be an inexperienced interpreter's attempt to discourage outside conversations, or visible nervousness about performance. Nevertheless, the deaf want to see a warm, human attitude in their interpreter. They will focus full attention on this person for the entirety of the meeting or discussion, and they prefer a pleasant personality who is comfortable with his or her role as an interpreter.

Appropriate dress for the type of situation is imperative. One disconcerted interviewee told of a business meeting he attended in which the interpreter showed up in jeans. Worse yet, the instance of a shapely female interpreter, who apparently enjoyed attracting attention to herself, showed up for an appointment in a tight sweater. Her dress and behavior was

so distracting that the client saw nothing of what the speaker said. Long or painted fingernails and large dangling jewelry were also said to be an interference.

A courtesy, such as pointing to whomever is speaking in the room, can be extremely helpful in orienting the deaf client to the flow of conversation and events. Matching a voice to a face can be as important as understanding what is said. Imagine receiving a steady stream of conversation without knowing to whom it belongs! Participation becomes almost impossible.

Mingling With The Deaf

What can interpreters do to maintain a high quality service or improve their craft? Most interviewees suggested that

interpreters need to associate with the deaf community. This intermingling with the hearing impaired will especially improve the interpreter's receptive skills and natural expression, the two facets of interpreting the deaf deem most important. What better way to absorb these integral parts of the language, than to interact with the native signers? Common acronyms, technical word usage and idiomatic trends all change with time and locality. The professional must keep abreast of the language evolution. It is only by watching and participating in the deaf community that interpreters are able to absorb sign language in its most natural state. With this knowledge, interpreters can produce the natural language in their interpretations, and thus provide the caliber of individually tailored service each client needs, desires and deserves.

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2. Date of Filing 10-1-88		3A. No. of Issues Published Annually Four (4)	
3. Frequency of Issue Quarterly		3B. Annual Subscription Price \$20.00	
4. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Street, City, County, State and ZIP+4 Code) (Not printers) 445 N. Pennsylvania, Suite 804 Indianapolis Marion County Indiana 46204			
5. Complete Mailing Address of the Headquarters of General Business Offices of the Publisher (Not printer) 445 N. Pennsylvania, Suite 804 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204			
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A. Total No. Copies (Net Press Run)		4,000	
B. Paid and/or Requested Circulation		Actual No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date	
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales		Vol. 38 No. 2, Spring, 1988 4,400	
2. Mail Subscription (Paid and/or requested)		0	
C. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 10B1 and 10B2)		3,801	
D. Free Distribution by Mail, Carrier or Other Means Samples, Complimentary, and Other Free Copies		4,184	
E. Total Distribution (Sum of C and D)		184	
F. Copies Not Distributed		3,985	
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When The Mind Hears will appear in French and German editions this year. The BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) is producing a TV special based on this book.

Author Harlan Lane is a specialist in the psychology of language and linguistics. He is Distinguished University Professor in the Psychology Department at Northeastern University where he established a program of teaching and research in American Sign Language. Dr. Lane has edited and written other books on related subjects.

***When The Mind Hears* • 537 Pages • Hard Cover**



A Silent World

A meadowlark whispers his secrets in song
his message woos my empty ears . . .
While some will enjoy every note issued forth
I sense other sounds than my peers.
A melody echoes in my mind alone
like a dancer it's lifted and twirled . . .
I perceive his contentment though I guess at his tune
For mine is a silent world.

I fantasize chatter of pixies at play
their laughter and squeals of delight;
The rumble of vehicles, swish of the wind
the snap of flames when logs ignite.
I frequently startle my kindred with glee
with awareness of life's tones so curled . . .
They entwine in the vacuum I have known since my birth
Within this my silent world.

—Randy Snow
Mason City, Iowa

My Father and My Mother

The suns do not allow perpetual bloom,
As we must tread with slower-measured feet,
And my life still flows onward like a stream.
So now it won't be long before we meet.

The ages have leafed o'er the wistful past
And softened mem'ries all the time gone by.
The passing days bring forth your longing dream
Like a hymn to the wonders of the sky.

Things ease into perspective only when
One walks ahead to closing of the days.
You are with me for all these pensive years,
And with your love I wend the tired ways.

True was your journey and the dream that brings,
While faith and valor to my years it rings.

—P. K. Monaghan
Jackson, Mississippi



MISS DEAF AMERICA PAGEANT CONTESTANTS—The stairway of the Omni Hotel in Charleston, South Carolina, was used for this group picture of the 1988 Miss Deaf America contestants. A print was used as a gift from the state contest winners to Helen Johnson Peterson, director of the pageant. (Photo credit: Philip N. Moos)